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## Cervical Cancer Disparities Between African-American Women and White Women in North Carolina, 1995-1998

by

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### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study is to portray current differences in North Carolina between African-American and white women in cervical cancer incidence, stage at diagnosis, treatment, and mortality.

**Methods:** Data from the North Carolina Central Cancer Registry on cervical cancer cases for 1995-1998 were used to examine racial differences in incidence, stage at diagnosis, and treatment. Data from North Carolina death certificates for 1995-1998 were used to calculate cervical cancer mortality rates for African-American and white women. The data are presented for the age groups 15-44, 45-64, and 65 and over. Also, age-adjusted cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates were calculated.

**Results:** The age-adjusted cervical cancer incidence rate for African-American women is 1.5 times the age-adjusted incidence rate for white women. The disparity is most pronounced among women ages 65 and older, where the incidence rate for African-American women is three times that for white women. Cervical cancer mortality rates are also much higher among African-American women. This difference in mortality is consistent with the findings that a much higher percentage of the African-American women with cervical cancer were diagnosed at a later stage, and the African-American women received less treatment for their cervical cancer than the white women.

**Conclusions:** Unmeasured socioeconomic factors associated with race may partly account for the cervical cancer differences observed here. These results suggest the need for increased preventive cervical cancer screening for African-American women, so that more cases of cancer can be detected at an earlier stage.

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**Note about the Authors:** Jessica Edwards is a doctoral student in the Department of Maternal and Child Health in the School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Paul Buescher works at the State Center for Health Statistics.



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